

MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL: JEFFERSON CITY



2011

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MISSION STATEMENT

(Adopted Nov. 4, 1999)



Missouri State Rehabilitation Council

Our Vision

The Missouri State Rehabilitation Council envisions a society that values all of its members equally and provides opportunities so that all people are able to meet their needs, fulfill their dreams and participate in society.

Our Mission

To ensure that persons with disabilities have opportunities to be as productive as possible by advising Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation that services provided to persons with disabilities are:

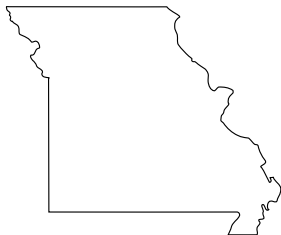
- of the highest quality.
- consumer directed.
- responsive to consumer choice.
- effective.
- individualized.
- culturally specific and relevant to labor market trends.

Our Responsibilities

To work in partnership with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to achieve positive outcomes for persons with disabilities by:

- providing input on the state plan, policies and practices affecting services to persons with disabilities.
- identifying strategies to address the needs of people who are not being served or who are being underserved.
- obtaining and interpreting consumer input.
- identifying corrective action consistent with that input.
- advocating for adequate resources to ensure that the rehabilitation needs of all Missourians are met.

To support Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation in complying with applicable laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Workforce Investment Act, the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.



MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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Phone: 573-751-3251 ■ TTY: 573-751-0881 ■ Facsimile: 573-751-1441

Mary Stodden
St. Charles
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Dennis Atkins
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Aimee Wehmeier
Columbia

Greg Wingert
Lohman

C. Jeanne Loyd
Assistant Commissioner
Ex Officio Member
Jefferson City

December 31, 2011

The Honorable Jay Nixon
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Nixon:

On behalf of the members of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council, I am pleased to present the Council's annual report for fiscal year 2011. In these pages, you will find the progress made by Missouri citizens who were served by vocational rehabilitation programs.

Each Council member has unique experiences in advocating for the rights of our fellow Missourians whose physical or mental disabilities may pose barriers to productive employment. Through our quarterly meetings and committee deliberations, we have given our support to Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to empower individuals with disabilities and to encourage decisions that lead to greater self-sufficiency.

We have advised Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation on innovative programming to reach underserved populations in the state as well as on exploring additional methods of obtaining consumer satisfaction feedback.

It has been my great privilege to work with members of the Council, as well as with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation staff, all of whom are dedicated to providing our citizens with the opportunity to make choices in obtaining meaningful employment. Employment is a key to independence.

Sincerely,

Mary Stodden
Chairperson

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS



Mary Stodden
St. Charles
Chairperson



C. Jeanne Loyd
Jefferson City
Ex Officio Member
VR Assistant Commissioner



Dennis Atkins
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Nia Ray
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Aimee Wehmeier
Columbia



Greg Wingert
Lohman

COUNCIL'S PURPOSE

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was first authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1998 (referred to hereafter as the Act). Section 105 of the Act requires the state vocational rehabilitation agency to establish a council.

The SRC was initially formed on June 1, 1993. Members are appointed by the governor and serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. As required by the Act, SRC members represent the Statewide Independent Living Council; the Parent Training and Information Center; the Client Assistance Program; the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program; the Office of Special Education, which is the state agency responsible for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the State Workforce Investment Board; community rehabilitation program service providers; disability advocacy groups; current or former applicants/recipients of vocational rehabilitation services; and business, industry and labor.

The SRC is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and advising VR regarding its performance on such issues as eligibility; the extent, scope and effectiveness of services; and any other functions affecting people with disabilities. Full SRC meetings are held quarterly on the first Thursday of February, May, August and November at the VR Central Office in Jefferson City. Subcommittees meet as needed throughout the year via conference calls.

DURING FY11, the SRC was actively involved with VR in the activities below.

Provided recommendations to VR on policy revisions

Coordinated and participated in presentations and activities with other councils and agencies including the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Client Assistance Program, the State Independent Living Council, the Department of Mental Health, the Parent Training and Information Program, the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Program, the Hearing Loss Association, the Governor's Council on Disability, the Division of Workforce Development, and the Office of Special Education

Attended and participated in VR public hearings to provide input on the state plan

Evaluated and provided recommendations on the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services and consumer satisfaction feedback

Analyzed and provided recommendations to VR regarding the state plan's comprehensive statewide needs assessment, goals, priorities, standards and performance indicators, and comprehensive system of personnel development

Assisted VR staff in preparing the SRC's 2011 annual report for the governor and the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration on the status of vocational rehabilitation services in Missouri

Provided comments to VR regarding issues pertaining to waiting lists (Order of Selection)

MISSION STATEMENT AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation

Mission

Our mission is to provide opportunities and resources to eligible individuals with disabilities leading to successful employment.

Vision

Our vision is to provide everyone with a quality VR experience.

Operating Principles

We will:

- ★ Act with a sense of urgency.
- ★ Provide quality customer service.
- ★ Maximize our resources.
- ★ Put people first.
- ★ Continuously evaluate our practices/processes.

Helping people with disabilities work successfully

December 31, 2011

The Honorable Jay Nixon
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Nixon:

The annual report presented to you from the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for fiscal year 2011 provides information on the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation employment program for individuals with disabilities.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation has operated under an Order of Selection since October 2003 due to the number of applicants requesting services, rising service costs and limited federal funding. The Rehabilitation Act requires eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities to receive services first. All other eligible individuals will receive services as funds become available.

Using stimulus funds, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation reduced the waiting list for services during FY11 and helped 4,528 individuals reach successful employment outcomes, which was an increase from the previous fiscal year. The program met six of the seven required Federal Standards and Performance Indicators and had a success rate of 61 percent for the individuals who received services and exited the program.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation works closely with 344 school districts across the state and provides services to more than 8,500 transition-age individuals annually. In FY11, the program assisted over 1,600 transition-age individuals in reaching their employment goals.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation grant dollars expended for purchased client services from community vendors are effective and help the local economies. In addition, the total annual increase in earnings from referral to closure for competitively employed clients in FY11 was over \$54 million. The program's customer satisfaction survey results are consistently among the top in the nation.

In closing, the Council and I offer our sincere appreciation for your personal interest and support in serving people with disabilities.

Sincerely,



C. Jeanne Loyd
Assistant Commissioner
Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services

HIGHLIGHTS

of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Important items to note from FY11 regarding VR's positive impact on the quality of consumers' lives and the communities it serves include:

- ▶ **4,528** consumers with disabilities achieved successful employment outcomes.
- ▶ **30,537** eligible consumers worked with VR counselors.
- ▶ **98%** of successfully employed consumers had significant disabilities.
- ▶ **670** consumers were successfully employed through supported employment services.
- ▶ **1,636** transition-age consumers reached successful employment outcomes.
- ▶ **344** school districts maintained cooperative work experience agreements with VR.
- ▶ **\$54,330,120** was the total annual increase in income from referral to closure for 4,446 competitively employed consumers.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Prepared on behalf of the SRC, this annual report highlights various programs and services of VR during federal fiscal year 2011 (Oct. 1, 2010, to Sept. 30, 2011).

On Oct. 1, 2003, due to insufficient funds to serve all eligible consumers, VR began operating under an Order of Selection with three priority categories. Eligible consumers with the most significant disabilities are required by law to receive services first (Category 1). Eligible consumers who have less significant disabilities are required to be placed on a waiting list for services (Categories 2 and 3). This action has affected the total number of employment outcomes, the success rate, the number of referrals to VR and the number of consumers served.

During FY11, VR counselors worked with more than 30,000 eligible people in various categories with an average daily census greater than 18,000. In FY11, 4,528 consumers had successful outcomes.



Eric Metzler, former VR consumer, reached his vocational goals and is currently working at a pet supply and service store. He was named the Missouri Rehabilitation Association's 2011 Consumer of the Year.

Figures 1-2 (below) illustrate the number of successful outcomes and the percentages of success during the past five years. Figure 2 shows that in FY11, 61 percent of consumers who received services with VR were successfully employed. This figure is a percentage of all eligible consumers leaving VR who received services.

State Funding

VR receives state funding from the general revenue fund, the Missouri Lottery and the Department of Mental Health. The match requirement is 21.3 percent state funding and 78.7 percent federal funding. VR used available stimulus monies in FY11 to provide additional services for individuals with disabilities. Use of these funds enabled VR to clear its waiting list for services. The stimulus funds also provided an opportunity to upgrade to a much-needed Web-based case management system that was implemented in spring 2011.

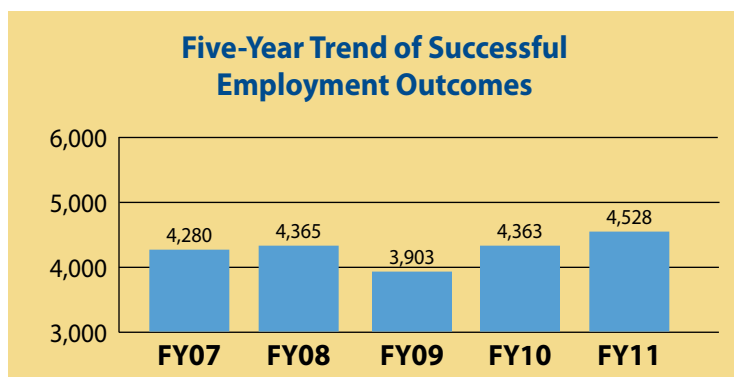


Figure 1

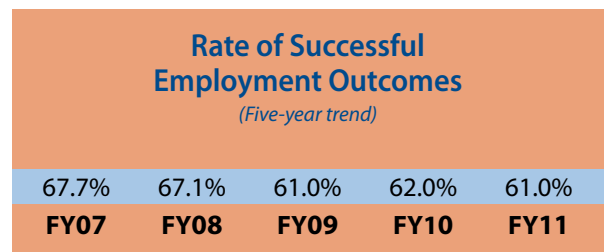


Figure 2



Dr. C. David Roberts, director of the University of Missouri-Columbia's Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center, presented an overview of the VR program and the SRC's role during the November meeting.

Social Security Reimbursement Program

The Social Security Administration (SSA) reimburses state vocational rehabilitation agencies for the costs of providing services to assist SSA recipients in becoming gainfully employed. As of Sept. 30, 2011, VR had received \$1,435,941 in SSA reimbursements.

Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction with staff and services is a VR priority. The SRC is responsible for reviewing and analyzing consumer satisfaction. On behalf of the SRC, VR administers a consumer satisfaction survey (pages 23-26). The feedback is shared with management, supervisors and counselors. This information is used as a tool to improve services, evaluate staff performance and determine training needs.

Postage-paid survey cards are mailed to a random sample of cases after an approved plan for employment is written to obtain consumer feedback at the time of service delivery. Cards are also mailed to a random sample of closed cases (cases closed either before or after receiving services) to gather information after consumers exit the program. To avoid influencing consumers' responses, the surveys are mailed from one central location by an individual other than a counselor or support staff.

AGENCY OVERVIEW » from 12

In FY11, 96 percent of consumers surveyed at the time of service delivery felt that they were treated with respect, and 95 percent reported that their experience with VR was good.

VR also gathers information after consumers have received services and left the program. During FY11, 95 percent felt they were treated with respect, and 93 percent reported that they were involved in making choices in their employment plans.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

VR and the SRC jointly conduct an annual comprehensive statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities. The conclusions and recommendations of the assessment are incorporated into VR's goals and priorities for the purpose of improving services for individuals with disabilities.



During the May meeting, Tonya Fambro (seated left), director of Independent Living Services, and Maureen Alexander (seated right), regional manager, spoke to the SRC about cross-training between VR and the Centers for Independent Living. The cross-training is designed to strengthen the delivery of services.

VR uses many methods to collect information for the assessment including consumer satisfaction surveys, public hearings, VR strategic teams, SRC input, VR case data and national census statistics.

Two areas that the assessment specifically focuses on are the needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals who have been traditionally unserved or underserved by vocational rehabilitation programs. The needs assessment completed in FY11 identified the minority populations of Hispanics and African-Americans, along with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), as underserved.

VR implements several strategies to address these areas of need. For strategy information, see pages 18-19.

Vocational Rehabilitation Teams

VR continues to enlist the aid of teams consisting of agency staff, providers and consumers to develop recommendations for strategic plan issues. The following teams meet on an ad hoc basis: Community Rehabilitation Providers/Vocational Rehabilitation, Transition, Cultural Diversity and Assistive Technology. As a result, many recommendations, which can be found throughout this report, have been implemented to improve services for people with disabilities.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Division of Workforce Development

The Division of Workforce Development operates under the Department of Economic Development. The division ensures that the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 are carried out by workforce development centers across the state. The Missouri Training and Employment Council is the state board that oversees workforce development.

The workforce development system is a partnership of mandated federal, state and local agencies providing services in one-stop shops known as Missouri Career Centers. Located in 14 regions throughout the state, Missouri Career Centers offer job-training and skills-development programs to all citizens who want assistance with gaining employment. VR is a key partner and works closely with Missouri Career Centers to provide program accessibility, physical access to services and assistive technology for people with disabilities. VR also provides ongoing cross-training and technical assistance to their staff on accommodations in the workplace. VR's assistant director of Workforce Development collaborates with partner agencies to ensure that all federal regulations pertaining to Title IV of WIA are followed. VR district supervisors serve as active members on 13 out of 14 local Workforce Investment Boards.

Department of Mental Health

The Department of Mental Health, Division of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services (DMH-CPS) and VR have been working collaboratively since 2009 on a supported employment grant funded by the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center project. The mission of the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program is to increase access to evidence-based supported employment, also known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS), for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. This national program systematically works with states to implement supported employment following the evidence-based guidelines, initially in a small number of sites (typically three to four) and expanding statewide over time. The program is administered in each participating state through the collaboration between the state mental health authority and the state vocational rehabilitation administration.

Missouri has six Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) participating in this project. Technical assistance and fidelity reviews to the evidenced-based practice are provided by a state trainer. Five sites have improved to "good" fidelity and have increased the number of people successfully employed in competitive jobs. The partnership between DMH-CPS and VR includes a training format, currently in development, that will be offered to interested CMHCs statewide.

Centers for Independent Living

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are community-based nonresidential programs designed to promote independent living for people with disabilities. In Missouri, there are 22 CILs that offer independent living services. The CILs are funded through VR grants and are managed by local boards made up of individuals with disabilities who have been successful in establishing their own independent lifestyles. VR works with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the CILs to provide direct services to

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION » from 14

individuals with disabilities. The 2010-2013 State Plan for Independent Living, developed by VR and the SILC, details the tasks necessary to accomplish the delivery of independent living services that will help individuals with disabilities to achieve their goals. As part of this collaborative effort, VR and the SILC created an outcome-based measurement tool for the CILs. The tool measures consumer satisfaction with various services provided by the centers. Survey results revealed that 97 percent of respondents felt that adaptive equipment and assistive technology made a positive difference in their lives. Ninety-six percent were satisfied with the home modification and personal assistance services that they received.

During FY11, the SILC was involved in a number of activities designed to address independent living needs. The group sponsored the Independent Living Summit from July 10-12 in Columbia. All 22 CILs participated in or attended the summit, which offered training to board members as well as staff. Throughout the year, several regional trainings were also held across the state on topics such as transition services and accessible housing.

TRANSITION SERVICES

The Rehabilitation Services Administration defines transition-age consumers as individuals with disabilities ages 16 through 24. VR assists these consumers either in or outside of the secondary school setting to successfully prepare them for moving into postsecondary education, integrated employment (including supported employment) or vocational training.

In striving to improve and expand the quality of services for transition-age consumers with significant disabilities in high school, VR provides support and technical assistance to local school districts. In addition, the Transition Team – which is composed of personnel from VR, school districts and other state/community agencies – provides support on transition-related activities and services for youth with disabilities.

In FY11, an ad hoc team represented by the CILs, local education agencies and VR created a resource toolkit to strengthen collaboration in transition planning for young adults with disabilities. The toolkit focuses on joint service delivery and contains valuable transition-related resources.

FY11 Transition Services Facts

- ▶ **1,636** transition-age consumers reached successful employment outcomes.
- ▶ **66%** of all transition-age consumers who received VR services and exited the program achieved successful employment outcomes.
- ▶ **8,587** transition-age consumers worked with VR counselors.
- ▶ **344** school districts maintained cooperative work experience agreements with VR.

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

VR strives to enhance community rehabilitation services throughout Missouri. VR and Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) collaboratively work with a new outcome-based service model that emphasizes quality employment outcomes. CRPs are nonprofit organizations accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. They provide people with vocational planning, job development and placement services, skills training, specialized employment services, and supported employment.



Members of the CRP/VR Team met in October to develop strategies for improving community-based services for individuals with disabilities. From left to right: Kelly Cook (forefront), lead VR counselor for the deaf; James Loveless, president and CEO of JobPoint; Karen Wilson, VR district supervisor; Greg Wingert, SRC member and director of MORE Group; Kim Kriegel, executive director of High Hope Employment Services; Elizabeth Perkins, VR counselor; and Leslie Garcia, VR regional manager.

While VR funded a multitude of services for more than 9,654 consumers in CRPs during FY11, it does not own or operate any of the programs. The CRP/VR Team composed of CRP staff and VR managers, supervisors and counselors meets throughout the year to improve community-based employment services for individuals with disabilities. This team developed a new model of employment services that took effect on Oct. 1, 2010. The model has four outcomes and promotes collaboration among the consumer, the VR counselor and the CRP. Milestones include the development of employment plans, placement, retention and successful employment outcomes. The team also developed new incentives for the CRPs based on whether consumers are placed in full-time positions, have wages at or above 55 percent of state average wages, and receive health care benefits. Additional incentives target underserved populations and certain disability groups.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

VR provides Supported Employment (SE) services to a diverse population of consumers as indicated by Figures 3-5 (pages 16-17). SE is defined as competitive work in an integrated work setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

During FY11, 72 percent of consumers who received SE services and exited the program were successfully employed.

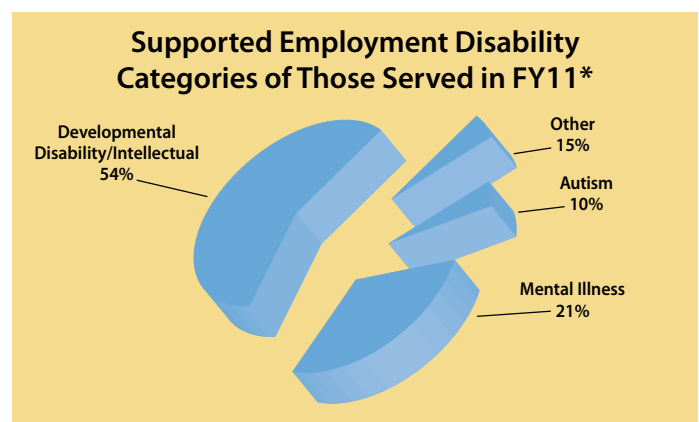


Figure 3

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES » from 16

In FY11, VR worked with 91 CRPs that provide SE services and cover all counties in Missouri. The CRP/VR Team is also developing an outcome-based model of SE services, which will begin in FY12.

Other Supported Employment Statistics

VR places an emphasis on the development of natural support systems for consumers who participate in supported employment. This reduces the costs associated with supported employment and job coaching. Figure 6 (below) shows the average costs of services, hourly wages and other statistics for supported employment.

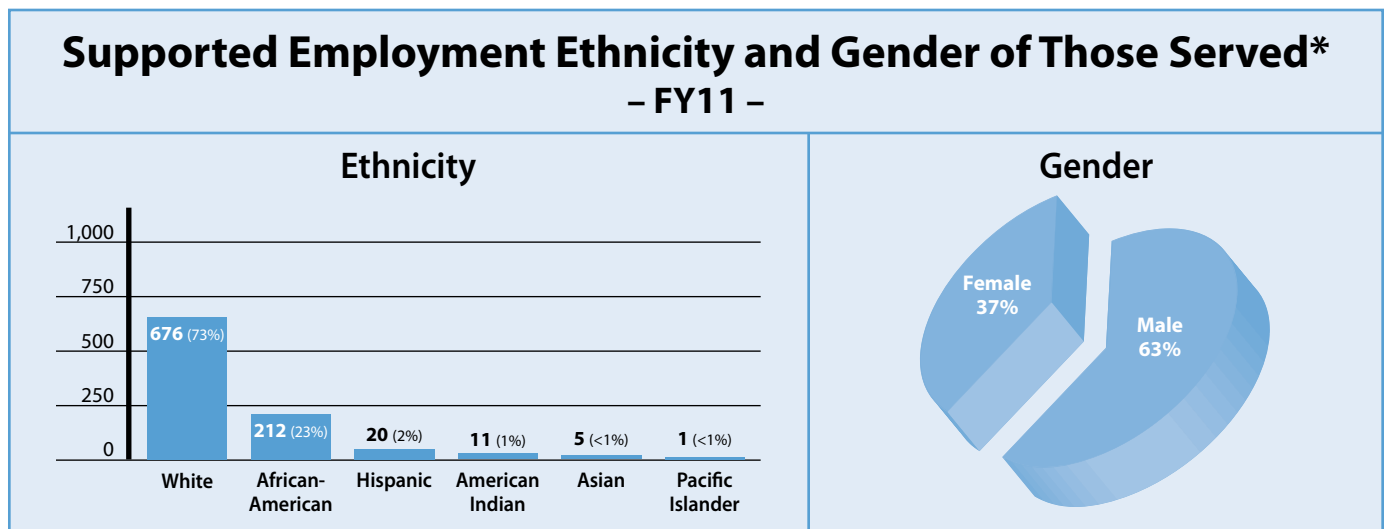


Figure 4

Figure 5

Other Supported Employment Statistics for FY11	
Average cost of job coaching services per consumer	\$2,010*
Average cost of assessment services per consumer	\$1,154*
Average cost of job development services per consumer	\$1,021*
Average hourly wage per consumer	\$7.92
Average hours per week worked per consumer	23
Success rate	72%*
Successful closures	670
Unsuccessful closures after services rendered	255

Figure 6

*Statistics are based on the number of consumers who exited the program both successfully and unsuccessfully after receiving SE services.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

In FY11, VR provided a variety of assistive technology services, devices and equipment to 428 individuals who received services and exited the program for a total cost of \$2,670,456. VR purchases assistive devices to help consumers with increasing, maintaining or improving functional capabilities. These devices may be purchased commercially or modified/customized by a technology specialist. Devices could be as simple as a modified door handle or as sophisticated as a voice-controlled computer system. Other types include prosthetic and orthotic equipment, hearing aids, wheelchairs, and other powered mobility equipment. Assistive technology services include evaluation, design, customization, adaptation, maintenance, repair, therapy and technical training.

VR has appointed an Assistive Technology Team to help meet consumers' needs. Some issues the team will focus on include best case practices; ongoing training; vehicle modification guidelines; and mobility, augmentative and computer assistive technology assessments. Also, a VR staff member is a representative on the Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) Advisory Council.

In April, MoAT sponsored the statewide Power Up 2011 Conference and Expo that was open to service providers, consumers, independent living specialists, VR staff and other professionals in the rehabilitation field. Nineteen of VR's professional staff attended the event. The conference was successful in providing consumers and professionals with an opportunity to view state-of-the-art technology and equipment designed to enhance and promote the independence and quality of life of people with disabilities.

UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS & WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

Improving services for underserved populations and workplace diversity are two significant priorities for VR and the SRC. Figure 7 (below) reflects the closure percentages by ethnicity for FY10 and FY11. This chart illustrates that African-American consumers continue to represent disproportionately higher rates of unsuccessful outcomes. VR remains committed to improving services, increasing employment outcomes and reducing the number of consumers from underserved populations who drop out prior to receiving services.

Closure Percentages by Ethnicity* (Comparison of FY10 and FY11 consumers)					
Status	White		African-American		Other
Successful employment outcomes	79%	78%	18%	18%	3%
Closed unsuccessfully after services	72%	71%	24%	25%	4%
Closed after eligibility before services	72%	70%	25%	26%	3%
	FY10	FY11	FY10	FY11	FY10

*Percentages reflect the total number of consumers in each status.

Figure 7

Cultural Diversity and Underserved Populations

During FY11, VR provided employees with training sessions on a variety of cultural diversity topics such as workplace diversity and serving and communicating with diverse clientele. VR conducted a comprehensive

statewide needs assessment that identified individuals with ASD, individuals with TBI, and individuals from the Hispanic and African-American communities as being underserved. VR utilizes the following strategies to address these areas of need:

- VR employs a part-time diversity consultant to assist with improving services to other underserved areas, developing training programs and establishing outreach strategies for consumers from diverse cultures.
- The Cultural Diversity Team (composed of CRP staff, the diversity consultant and VR district office staff) meets throughout the year to develop strategies for serving individuals from diverse cultures.
- The Transition and Cultural Diversity teams are working on a pilot project with school districts to address the dropout rates of students with disabilities from minority backgrounds.
- VR has appointed an assistant director of special projects who collaborates with CRPs on strategies to better serve individuals with ASD. This position also works to improve services for other specialized populations including individuals with TBI.

FY11 Employee Diversity	
Employees with Disabilities	
Counselors	22%
District and assistant supervisors	21%
Administrators	12%
Total professional staff	20%
Support staff	10%
Minority Employees	
Counselors	12%
African-American	8%
Other	4%
District and assistant supervisors	17%
Administrators	6%
African-American	6%
Total professional staff	12%
Support staff	20%
African-American	16%
Other	4%

Figure 8

Diversity in the Workplace

VR strives to recruit, hire and maintain a diverse workforce. Figure 8 (above) shows the specific categories of VR employees as of Sept. 30, 2011.

VR recruits individuals with culturally diverse backgrounds. All job openings are listed on the VR and Missouri Career Source websites and are sent to the CILs. Vacancies are advertised in local newspapers as well as African-American and Hispanic newspapers. All VR counselor vacancy notices are sent to historically black colleges and universities such as Lincoln University in Jefferson City; Southern University in Baton Rouge, La.; Fort Valley State College in Fort Valley, Ga.; and Jackson State University in Jackson, Miss. Recruitment contacts have been made with all colleges in Missouri that have a high population of minority students. VR continues to participate in recruitment activities, career fairs and various community programs.



Carol Gamm-Smith (left), VR counselor, met with Veronica Fields (right) during a Missouri Career Center job fair in June.

VR also works to recruit individuals with disabilities. All district supervisors and counselors receive job vacancy notices. Many of the individuals referred by staff are interviewed and hired or participate in field experiences and internships sponsored by VR. At the time of this report, approximately 22 percent of the counselor positions were held by individuals with disabilities.

In addition to VR's recruitment efforts, all staff participate in cultural diversity training provided during new employee orientation. During FY11, diversity trainings were held across the state and at VR's spring supervisors meeting. More trainings were scheduled for fall/winter 2011. This ongoing training has received positive feedback and is an outcome of one of the Cultural Diversity Team's recommendations.

PROJECT SEARCH LEADS TO JOB SUCCESS

*BY LISA SONE, SUPERVISOR,
JEFFERSON CITY VR CENTRAL OFFICE*

Founded in 1996 by Erin Riehle at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Project Search has grown to more than 150 sites in 42 states and four countries. The program addresses the needs of young adults ages 18-21 with intellectual or developmental disabilities who are in their last year of high school. Project Search helps students transition from school to the working world through hands-on experience and job-skills development.

The six 2011 graduates of Missouri's first Project Search program – Paige Hall, Trevor Morse, Amanda Whipple, Danielle Steward, Nick McMullen and Tyler Scott – participated in the program at Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital (BJSPH) for a full school year. As the host business, BJSPH provided classroom space and hospital internships for the students. Regina Wade-Johnson, a teacher from the Orchard Farm School District, served as their instructor; Orchard Farm also provided an employment advisor, Beatriz Amaris.

The students spent an hour in the classroom every day studying employment skills such as career exploration, job search and interviewing techniques, becoming a self-advocate, and building self-esteem. They also worked on developing independent living skills.



Trevor Morse now works for IKON.

About five hours a day were spent on an internship rotation in areas such as human resources, medical records, food services and the mailroom. The students worked 10-12 weeks in three different BJSPH departments throughout the year. Department mentors and job coaches helped them learn the skills needed to work in each section.



Project Search's Class of 2011 (left to right): Tyler Scott, Amanda Whipple (front), Nick McMullen, Regina Wade-Johnson (instructor), Paige Hall, Danielle Steward and Trevor Morse.

Kim Gee, a counselor in the St. Charles VR office, is the VR transition services contact with Project Search. She said that participating students face high expectations.

"We look at stretching (their) abilities and helping them to do the absolute most that they can possibly do," she said.

To be selected for Project Search, students must be eligible for VR services and a fifth year in high school. VR and the students' school districts evaluate whether a student would be a good match for the program. Applications are reviewed by a team; students who meet the criteria are interviewed, along with their parents, to ensure their level of commitment.

VR officially became involved with Project Search after Life Skills initiated the pilot project in Missouri. Janis Miller, district supervisor of the St. Charles VR office, said Project Search is connected to VR because, as a transition program, Project Search receives transition resources. VR pays a portion of the program's training costs including assessment, task analysis and job development.

"It teaches really good skills," Miller said. "I have high hopes that we can expand it to include adults at some point or young adults who have already graduated."

PROJECT SEARCH LEADS TO JOB SUCCESS » from 20



From left to right: Tim Gaines, VR coordinator; Janis Miller, St. Charles VR office district supervisor; Regina Wade-Johnson, Project Search instructor; and Kim Gee, VR counselor, attended a tour of the Project Search rotations at Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital.

Wade-Johnson designed her instruction based on how the students viewed the program – they were interns, not students, in a business training lab, not a classroom.

“Once they get a sample of what they are capable of doing, then they can decide what they want to do long-term,” she said. “This is career-driven, not just a job.”

Wade-Johnson updated Gee monthly on the students’ progress and said that VR’s involvement ensured there was “a plan in place to effectively support the interns to be successful in their jobs or job search.” In addition, job coaches were made available after the students secured competitive employment for on-site support.

One of the 2011 graduates, Paige Hall, said Project Search taught her how to work through problems she might encounter while employed and increased her confidence. Her experience at the program paid off when she was hired at MetLife, where she works as an office assistant.

“I like the people (at MetLife) and everything I do,” Paige said. “It brightens up my day. It helps them out a lot. They depend on me.”

Paige’s mother, Ellen Hall, said her daughter received practical job-search experience in addition to quality instruction. The students were given job descriptions for the hospital departments offering internships. Paige decided which areas she wanted to work in and

interviewed with the department managers, which Ellen described as a fantastic experience.

“I don’t think that Paige would have the job she has now without Project Search,” Ellen said.

Another graduate, Trevor Morse, also gained employment after Project Search. He works full-time with IKON as an on-site services specialist and prepares medical information for shipment.

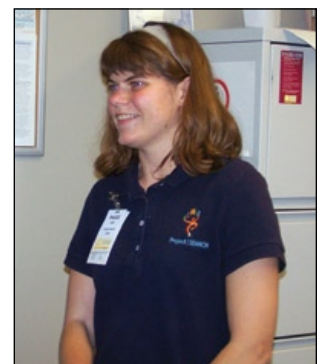
During his first week at IKON, Trevor had a Life Skills job coach with him for the entire day. As he has gained more experience, the coach has cut back to about six hours a week.

Trevor described Project Search as a great opportunity “to try new stuff out. I would recommend it to anyone.”

His mother, Cindy Morse, said, “It was such a great experience for him. He learned so many invaluable skills in the different departments.”

The second Project Search class began in August, and the new students have started learning about talents they might not even know they have. Wade-Johnson, who is continuing as the project’s instructor, said the students are in a place that “gives them the avenue to explore those skills.”

Project Search is a partnership among Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital; Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation; Life Skills of St. Louis; the Developmental Disabilities Resource Board in St. Peters; and the Orchard Farm, St. Charles, Francis Howell and Wentzville school districts. All partners contribute through funding and/or resources. To view a video about the Project Search graduates, go to share.ofsd.k12.mo.us/SitePages/Project%20Search.aspx. To learn more about the enrollment criteria for prospective students, contact Regina Wade-Johnson at rwadejohnson@ofsd.k12.mo.us.



Paige Hall now works for MetLife.

appendices

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

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CONSUMER SATISFACTION

The SRC's Program Evaluation Committee continues to work with VR on surveying and monitoring consumer satisfaction. Survey results were positive during FY11. On behalf of the SRC, VR surveyed 1,300 consumers with approved written plans for employment with a response rate of 37 percent. The results are listed on page 24. Separate survey results for consumers who received services can be found on page 25. Thirty-six percent of the 1,137 surveyed consumers responded. Results are also available on page 26 for the 928 surveyed consumers who left the program before receiving services. Their response rate was 31 percent. VR implemented a new case management system in FY11; therefore, results are based on a six-month period.

A sample of consumer comments taken from completed survey cards can be found below.

FY11 CONSUMER COMMENTS



My counselor went above and beyond what I had hoped for in getting valuable assistance.

They were excellent in helping me in all ways.
This is a great service.

VR was courteous, worked fast and
communication was superb.
I would recommend them to anyone.

Anytime I needed my counselor, she was there for me.

They were wonderful, helpful and compassionate.

My counselor was very professional and dedicated to helping me.

VR has been a real lifesaver. I probably would have had
to leave my current job if VR had not assisted.

My experience could not have been any better. 

Survey Results for Consumers with an Approved Written Plan for Employment

(Specific group responses to survey cards distributed during FY11)**

	Total responses received	Treated me with respect		Helped understand disability		Information readily available		Supportive & acted in best interest		Experience was good		Satisfied with referral services*	
		AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE
Statewide total of responses (Percentage is the number divided by the total number of who agreed and disagreed)	484	96%	4%	94%	6%	94%	6%	94%	6%	95%	5%	95%	5%
Persons with significant disabilities (Categories I and II)	454	96%	4%	94%	6%	94%	6%	94%	6%	95%	5%	95%	5%
African-Americans	66	95%	5%	95%	5%	93%	7%	95%	5%	95%	5%	94%	6%
Males	271	96%	4%	93%	7%	94%	6%	94%	6%	95%	5%	93%	7%
Females	213	97%	3%	94%	6%	94%	6%	95%	5%	96%	4%	96%	4%
Supported employment consumers	62	98%	2%	95%	5%	95%	5%	93%	7%	95%	5%	100%	0%
Persons with intellectual disabilities	51	95%	5%	94%	6%	92%	8%	92%	8%	92%	8%	95%	5%
Persons with mental illness	86	96%	4%	91%	9%	93%	7%	95%	5%	95%	5%	96%	4%
Persons with deafness/hard of hearing	64	98%	2%	96%	4%	95%	5%	97%	3%	97%	3%	92%	8%
Persons with traumatic brain injury	16	93%	7%	100%	0%	93%	7%	100%	0%	93%	7%	100%	0%
Persons with alcohol/drug dependency	10	88%	12%	88%	12%	75%	25%	88%	12%	88%	12%	83%	17%
Persons with specific learning disabilities	38	100%	0%	97%	3%	97%	3%	94%	6%	97%	3%	99%	1%
Persons with orthopedic impairments	16	95%	5%	92%	8%	95%	5%	85%	15%	96%	4%	91%	9%

*Individuals who responded "NA" are not included in the percentages shown.

**Due to a change in the case management system, results are based on a six-month period.

Survey Results for Consumers Who Received Services

(Specific group responses to survey cards distributed during FY11)***

	Total responses received	Treated me with respect		Information readily available		Helped understand disability		Involved in choices		Helped me get a job		Improved quality of life		Experience was good		Satisfied with referral services**	
		AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE
Statewide total of responses (Percentage is the number divided by the total number of who agreed and disagreed)	405	95%	5%	93%	7%	90%	10%	93%	7%	81%	19%	88%	12%	91%	9%	83%	17%
Persons with significant disabilities* (Categories I and II)	399	96%	4%	94%	6%	90%	10%	93%	7%	81%	19%	88%	12%	92%	8%	89%	11%
Successful employment outcomes	269	97%	3%	96%	4%	93%	7%	97%	3%	90%	10%	94%	6%	95%	5%	93%	7%
Unsuccessful closures after services	136	90%	10%	84%	16%	81%	19%	82%	18%	52%	48%	67%	33%	80%	20%	75%	25%
African-Americans*	82	92%	8%	88%	12%	89%	11%	87%	13%	73%	27%	76%	24%	85%	15%	83%	17%
Males*	224	95%	5%	94%	6%	89%	11%	93%	7%	84%	16%	88%	12%	91%	9%	85%	15%
Females*	181	96%	4%	93%	7%	92%	8%	93%	7%	78%	22%	88%	12%	92%	8%	92%	8%
Supported employment consumers*	65	93%	7%	91%	9%	82%	18%	93%	7%	83%	17%	85%	15%	87%	13%	84%	16%
Persons with intellectual disabilities*	63	95%	5%	98%	2%	93%	7%	98%	2%	91%	9%	91%	9%	95%	5%	93%	7%
Persons with mental illness*	72	94%	6%	89%	11%	89%	11%	91%	9%	63%	37%	76%	24%	87%	13%	87%	13%
Persons with deafness/ hard of hearing*	44	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	94%	6%	100%	0%	100%	0%	95%	5%
Persons with traumatic brain injury*	8	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	83%	17%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Persons with alcohol/drug dependency*	7	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Persons with specific learning disabilities*	26	89%	11%	100%	0%	89%	11%	94%	6%	83%	17%	89%	11%	89%	11%	100%	0%
Persons with orthopedic impairments*	10	97%	3%	90%	10%	86%	14%	86%	14%	74%	26%	85%	15%	87%	13%	80%	20%

*Total responses from consumers who received VR services and exited the program either successfully or unsuccessfully.

**Individuals who responded "NA" are not included in the percentages shown.

***Due to a change in the case management system, results are based on a six-month period.

Survey Results for Consumers Who Left the VR Program Before Services

(Specific group responses to survey cards distributed during FY11)***

	Total responses received	Treated me with respect		Information readily available		Helped understand disability		Involved in choices		Experience was good		Satisfied with referral services**	
		AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE
Statewide total of responses (Percentage is the number divided by the total number of who agreed and disagreed)	286	89%	11%	80%	20%	76%	24%	80%	20%	80%	20%	75%	25%
Persons with significant disabilities* (Categories I and II)	275	89%	11%	80%	20%	75%	25%	81%	19%	80%	20%	75%	25%
African-Americans*	87	86%	14%	74%	26%	75%	25%	77%	23%	77%	23%	67%	33%
Males*	161	92%	8%	79%	21%	74%	26%	85%	15%	77%	23%	72%	28%
Females*	125	85%	15%	81%	19%	78%	22%	75%	25%	83%	17%	79%	21%
Persons with intellectual disabilities*	52	96%	4%	89%	11%	96%	4%	86%	14%	96%	4%	90%	10%
Persons with mental illness*	81	82%	18%	80%	20%	63%	37%	79%	21%	82%	18%	71%	29%
Persons with deafness/hard of hearing*	3	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Persons with traumatic brain injury*	14	78%	22%	78%	22%	78%	22%	78%	22%	75%	25%	50%	50%
Persons with alcohol/drug dependency*	13	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Persons with specific learning disabilities*	13	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	80%	20%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Persons with orthopedic impairments*	2	95%	5%	58%	42%	68%	32%	72%	28%	58%	42%	50%	50%

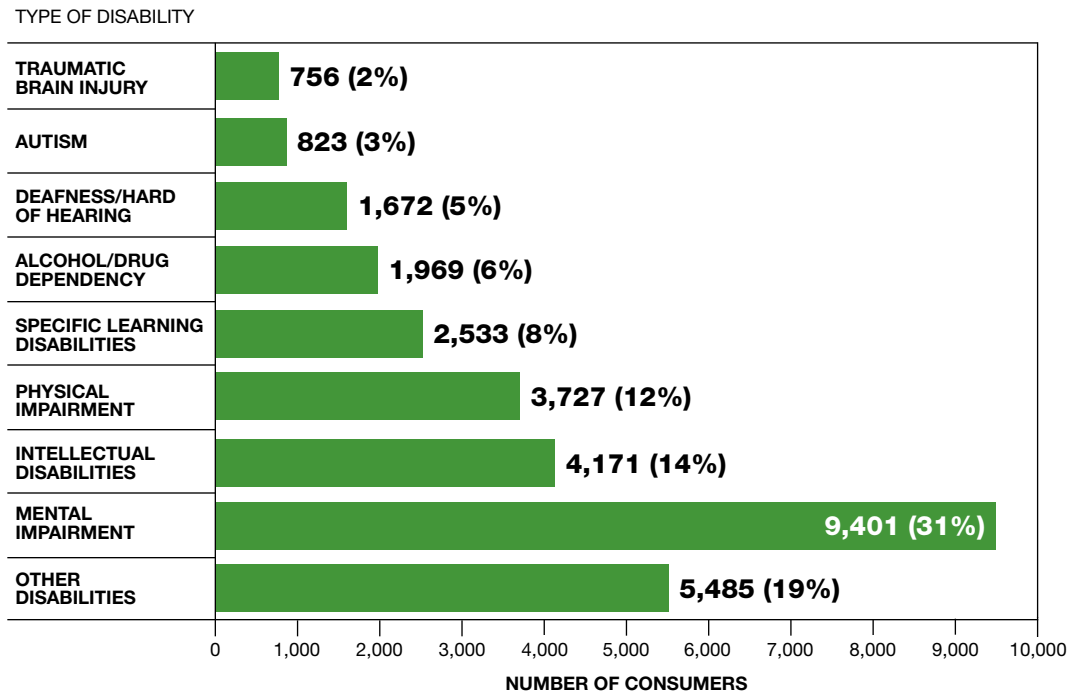
*Total responses of eligible consumers who left the program before receiving services.

**Individuals who responded "NA" are not included in the percentages shown.

***Due to a change in the case management system, results are based on a six-month period.

Disability Categories OF THE 30,537 ELIGIBLE CONSUMERS

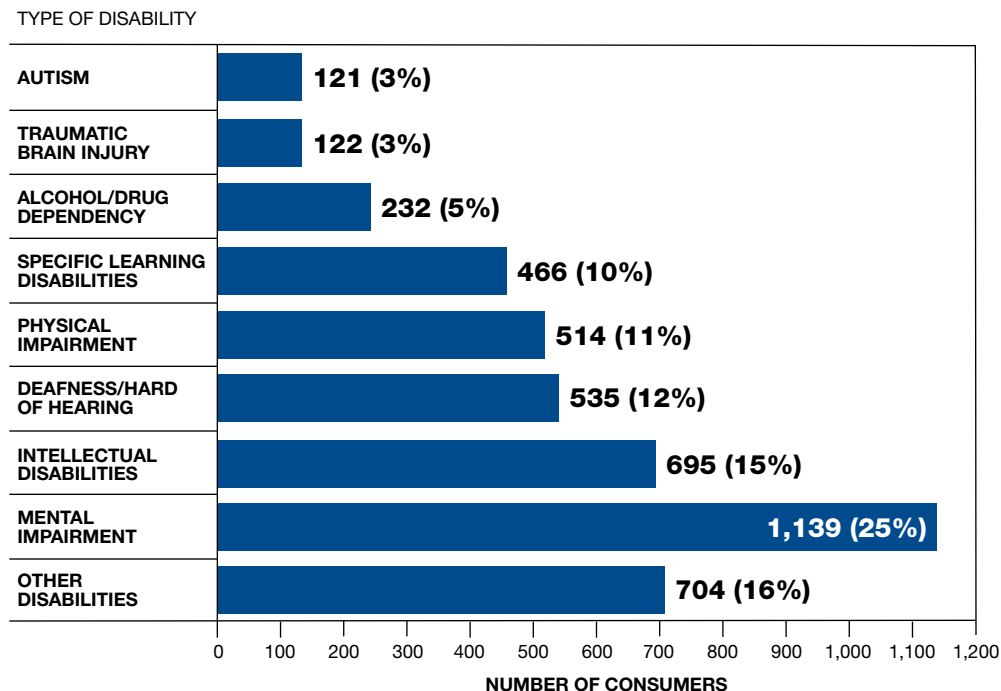
Fiscal Year 2011



Disability Categories

OF THE 4,528 CONSUMERS WITH SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

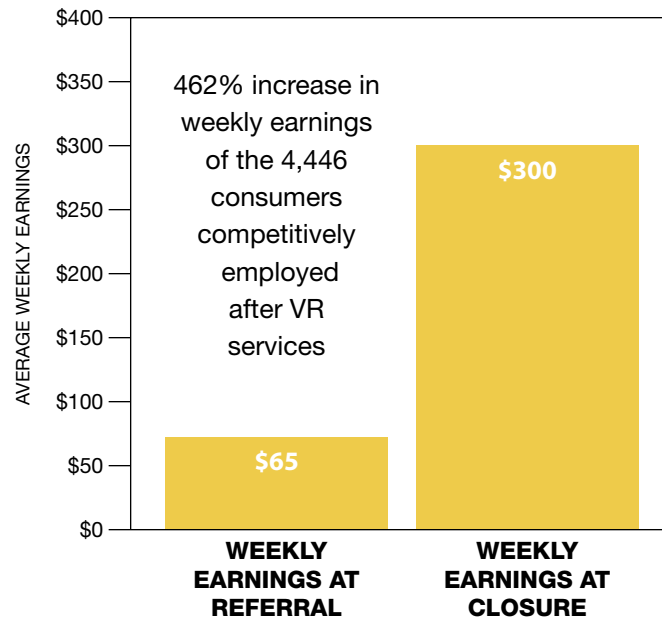
Fiscal Year 2011



Impact of VR Services

ON WEEKLY EARNINGS OF CONSUMERS WITH SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Fiscal Year 2011



With an increase in average weekly earnings of \$235 for the 4,446 competitively employed consumers, the total annual increase in income from referral to closure amounted to \$54,330,120.

Characteristics OF CONSUMERS WITH SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Fiscal Year 2011

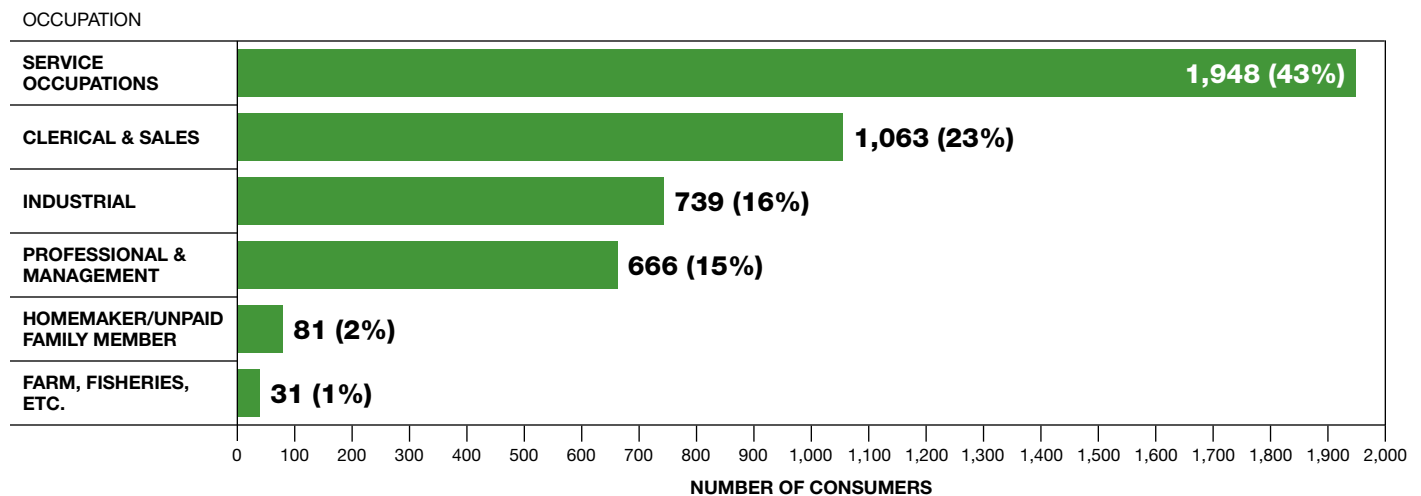
Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	2,562	57%
Female	1,966	43%
Total	4,528	100%

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
White	3,538	78%
African-American	805	18%
Hispanic	94	2%
American Indian	58	1%
Asian	29	<1%
Pacific Islander	4	<1%
Total	4,528	100%

Age	Number	Percentage
Less than 20 years	390	9%
20 through 34	1,888	42%
35 through 44	739	16%
45 through 64	1,334	29%
65 and over	177	4%
Total	4,528	100%

Occupations OF THE 4,528 CONSUMERS WITH SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Fiscal Year 2011



Standards AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS REPORT

Fiscal Year 2011

INDICATORS	Federal Standards	Missouri VR Results
1.1 Change in Employment Outcomes	≥ Previous year	165
1.2 Percentage of Employment Outcomes	55.8%	61%
1.3 Competitive Employment Outcomes	72.6%	98.2%
1.4 Competitive Employment Outcomes with a Significant Disability	62.4%	97.5%
1.5 Ratio of Exit Wage to State Average Pay	.52	.51
1.6 Difference in the Exiter vs. Application Income as a Single Source of Support	53%	56.3%
2.1 Service Rate of Minority to Non-Minority Individuals with Disabilities	.80	.89

Expenditures

Fiscal Year 2011



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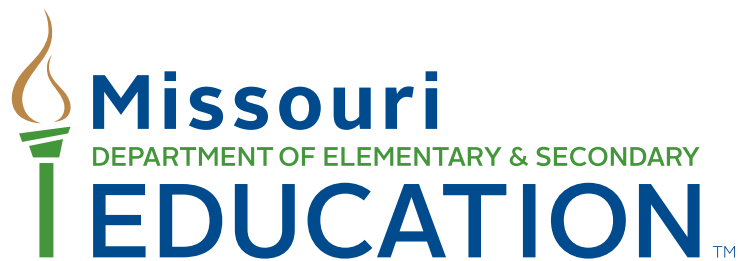
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December 2011

**Published by Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
3024 Dupont Circle, Jefferson City, MO 65109
Website: vr.dese.mo.gov**

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